(b) if so, the progress made so far; and

(c) the time by which it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM) : (a) to (c). A suitable site for the LPT project at Attappadi in Pallakhad district of Kerala has been taken over and departmental works are in progress. As per the present indications, the installation work on the project is expected to be completed by March, 1997.

[Translation]

Poor Maintenance of Telephone in Maharashtra

250. SHRI HANSRAJ AHIR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether telephone facilities in a number of villages in Maharashtra are on the verge of closure due to its poor maintenance;

(b) if so, the schemes of the Government for maintaining the telephones in goodshape;

(c) whether the Government propose to replace the old cross-bar sytem with fully electronic system in the State; and

(d) if so, the time by which the cross-bar system is likely to be replaced?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) No, Sir. Only some village Public Telephones (VPTs) have been reported faulty.

(b) The Telecom Circles have been asked to enter into Annual Maintenance contracts with the manufacturers. To monitor the performance of VPTs regorous testing procedure have been prescribed.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) By the end of 9th Five Year Plan.

[English]

Completion of Railway Projects in North-Eastern States

251. SHRI BAJU BAN RIYAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the physical progress of the different railway projects in North Eastern States;

(b) the names of the projects proposed to be completed during the current years; and

(c) the details of allocation made during the current year, project-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (c). Different Railway Projects in North Eastern States :

Progress of Railway Projects in N.E. States :

Name of the Project	Physical Progress	Budget Allocation in current year
New Lines		
1. Jogighopa-Guwahati Rail-cum-Road Bridge across Brahmaputra at Jogighopa alongwith BG Railway Line from Jogighopa to Guwahati.	i. Overall Progress 72.30%. ii. Rail-cum-Road-Bridge 94%. iii. Railway Line 51.05%.	27.00 crores
2. Kumarghat-Agartala	Nil	01.00 crores
3. Dudhnoi-Deepa	Nil	05.00 crores
Gauge Conversion		
4. Lumding to Dibrugarh including link branches (628 kms)	47.2%	88.00 crores
5. New Guwahati-Lumding including Chaparmukh-Haibargaon linked branch (202.11 Km)	99.5%	05.19 crores
6. Lumding-Silchar including	Nil new alignment between Migrendisa - Ditokcherra (198 Km)	10.00 crores

(b) The following project will be completed in the current year :

Dimapur-Dibrugarh-Tinsukia-Lekhapani Gauge Conversion project.

Project for Computerisation of entire Freight Operation

252. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether eleven years ago the Indian Railways gave a green signal to an ambitious Rs. 1079 crores project for computerisation of its entire freight operation by 1991;

(b) if so, whether after spending more than 134 crores the operation remains today manually controlled;

(c) if so, whether in 1985, the Government had set up the centre for Railway information system which was to design develop and implement the freight operation information system;

(d) the main reasons for not setting up this centre for operation; and

(e) the total loss incurred due to non-implementation of the programme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The Freight Operation Information System (FOIS) project for the Indian Railways was approved by the Planning Commission in November, 1989 at a cost of Rs. 1098 crore with the stipulation that it should be implemented in the first phase on the Northern Railway. The detailed estimate of the FOIS for the Northern Railway was sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 267.2 crore in December, 1992 and the target date for its implementation was 31.12.95.

(b) So far a total expenditure about Rs. 162 crore has been incurred on the project. The project is yet to be completed and until that happens freight operations will have to be manually controlled.

(c) The Centre for Railway Information Centre (CRIS) was set up in 1986 mainly to design, develop and to implement the FOIS.

(d) The software developed so far by the CRIS has been on trial in Delhi area of the Northern Railway. Various problems and deficiencies were encountered in the software during the trials and were attempted to be resolved. Several of these have, however, been persisting. To identify the reasons for this and find solutions, a technical study of the project was entrusted to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi in October, 1995. The IIT report, which evaluates the relevance and utility of the software and recommends guidelines for making the system workable, beneficial and cost effective has been received and is under examination.

(e) While there is delay in implementing the project, there has been no cost overrun so far.

Amenities to Passengers at Belur Railway Station

253. SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that minimum passenger amenities are not available at Belur railway station, Eastern Railway;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any steps has been taken for providing waiting room, toilets, drinking water, overbridge and to clear the water-pass; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d). Belur, a suburban railway station is already provided with amenities commensurate with the volume of passenger traffic handled. Waiting hall, toilets, drinking water facilities and foot-over-bridge are already available at the station.

Late Running of Suburban Trains

254. SHRI ANIL BASU : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that all the suburban trains of Calcutta are running late daily during the last few months;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to run suburban trains in time?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). It is the endeavour of the Railways to run trains punctually. However, at times due to certain unavoidable reasons such as Agitations/Bandhs, Miscreant Activities, Accidents, Dislocation due to equipment failures and bad weather etc. trains sometimes, run late. A more intensive monitoring has been initiated to improve the punctuality performance of trains.

Inclusion of Plassey Railway Station in the Important tourist Places of West Bengal

255. DR. ASIM BALA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that Plassey is a historically important station of West Bengal and Railways have failed to include the name of Plassey in the important places/tourist places of West Bengal in the Time Table published by the Eastern Railway;